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Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Discussion paper contributed by the Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group**

Summary

Clear and reliable framework conditions, with sound legislation and fair law enforcement procedures in place, are the prerequisites for the development of a sustainable forestry sector. Access to resources needs to be ensured as well as access to relevant information, services and markets. The value added cooperation between Governments and forest-related organizations and processes within the framework of an international arrangement on forests (United Nations Forum on Forests) can have a crucial role in creating these enabling conditions.

Property rights are often the first step towards sustainable resource use and yet their importance is not adequately recognized in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. Policy and decision makers need to give higher priority to the establishment of clear ownership structures in favour of family forest owners and community forest owners.

The full potential of the forest sector in contributing to the Millennium Development Goals can be developed only in partnership with other sectors such as agriculture, energy, research, transport, tourism, etc. In this respect, national forest programmes are crucial in defining mutually supportive and beneficial objectives.

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** Prepared by the Confederation of European Forest Owners.

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Capacity-building and training need to be given priority for the sustainable development of the world's forest resources. Well-informed and well-trained family forest owners will take responsible decisions and thus each will contribute individually to the shared objectives of sustainable development.

The underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation are to be found outside the sector. There is a need to develop strategies that create values and incentives for the sustainable conservation and use of forest goods and services.

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Introduction

1. The present discussion paper highlights essential elements based on written and oral contributions from the major group of small forest owners (family forest owners) to the United Nations Forum on Forests process from its first to its fourth session.

2. The family forest owners network currently assembles family forest owners from Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Europe (23 European countries) and the United States of America. In the future, increased efforts will be taken to reach out to family forest owners and community forest owners in the southern hemisphere, in particular to existing networks in South America and Africa, to achieve a comprehensive view on the variety of challenges and opportunities that this major group is facing.

3. Family forest owners, knowing that the generations to follow will also depend on goods and services from their forests, have a genuine interest in a balanced approach to sustainable forest management. The responsibility of family forest owners for maintaining the forest on a long-term basis is firmly rooted. Family forest owners stand for efficient and sustainable use of their forest resources serving multiple purposes and values based on long-term generation-bridging thinking.

4. Sustainable forest management and the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of the world's forest resources play a key role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, notably Goals 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 7: Ensure environmental sustainability; and 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

5. The practical know-how of family forest owners on the use of forest resources around the globe combined with sound scientific knowledge offers a great potential for responsible and sustainable action on the ground.

I. Brief assessment of the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

A. Secure property and land tenure rights: the key to responsible and sustainable action

6. As stated in paragraph 40 of the note by the Secretariat on financing for sustainable forest management: current challenges in the changed financial environment dated 27 October 2003 (E/CN.18/AC.2/2003/2), "property rights are often the first step towards sustainable resource use". The basis for sustainable forest management is secure property and land tenure rights. Without secure property and land tenure rights, neither a sense of responsibility, nor an interest in managing forest in such a way as to ensure that they meet present and future needs, can be developed.

7. Ownership — in particular family ownership and community forest ownership — creates values, like the production of renewable material, the protection of water reservoirs, and the conservation of biological diversity and the

supply of food. Giving the right of ownership to a large number of people leads to the creation of a variety of values. The owner's right to use and manage the multiple goods and benefits of forests contributes to a strong sense of responsibility for the conservation of this natural heritage.[1]

8. The positive effect of clear ownership structures in favour of family forest owners for the responsible and sustainable management of the world's forest resources is not recognized as yet by policy and decision makers.

9. The global forest policy dialogue needs to recognize that one important building block in achieving the above-mentioned Millennium Development Goals is the commitment to establishing secure property and land tenure rights and ensuring the access to forest resources of family forest owners and community forest owners.

B. National forest programmes: building partnerships

10. The immediate and long-term goals of the forest-based sector need to be embedded in cross-sectoral strategies with other policies that have a direct impact on the sustainable development of forest resources. The products, goods and services provided by sustainable forest management have cross-sectoral and society-wide importance, for example, for the substitution of non-renewable materials, the conservation of biological diversity, the protection of water reservoirs, the contribution to renewable energy targets, and the development of recreational services, and as a reservoir for the health and medical sector.

11. National forest programmes provide a viable mechanism through which to develop these cross-sectoral strategies. They should be used to raise the profile of the forest-based sector in defining and implementing priorities for national sustainable development strategies.

12. Family forest owners have a prominent role in national forest programmes. They act as interested and involved parties and simultaneously as decision makers on the ground. It is thus essential that national forest programmes be developed in a partnership spirit that leads to an even distribution of costs and benefits for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

C. Capacity-building and economic viability: helping forest owners to help themselves

13. Know-how and understanding on the complex nature of sustainable forest management are the basis for its implementation. Sustainable forestry is not about trees, but about people. Investment in the capacity of family forest owners is key in achieving sustainable forest management.

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[1] Center for International Forestry Research, *Forests and People: Research that Makes a Difference* (available from http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/AReports/CIFOR%2010th_ANNIV_1-38.pdf). In Africa and Asia, villagers participating in adaptive collaborative management have said that it increased their sense of ownership over forest resources and gave them the confidence to participate in processes that would affect their lives and their environment for the better. (Stripped down to its basics, adaptive collaborative management encompasses establishing institutional arrangements and processes that encourage local democracy and collaboration and provide the time and space for group reflection.)

14. Forest owners associations are, in that respect, becoming increasingly important. They are the most important structural mechanism through which to overcome the fragmentation of ownership. It is mainly cooperation through a forest owner association that enables individual small forest owners to participate actively in the wood market. Without the consolidation of logistics and harvesting, the majority of small forest owners would not have the capacity to invest in the sustainable management of their forests. Forest owner associations are, in addition, key multipliers for the dissemination and successful implementation of national and global policies.

15. Economic viability is a prerequisite for carrying out sustainable forest management. Financial security is needed for the enhancement of social, cultural and ecological values. Fair market conditions and a long-term reliable legal framework that is effectively enforced are minimum requirements for economically viable forest management.

D. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation: restoring the value of forest goods and services

16. The reasons for deforestation and forest degradation are, in most cases, to be found outside the forest sector itself: poverty and the demand for food and energy of growing populations are among the main underlying causes.

17. Strategies for the preservation and extension of the world's forest resources need to address, in the first place, the primary underlying causes, in particular in terms of the alleviation of poverty.

18. In Europe, where more than half of the forests are owned and managed by families, the forest area increases by 920,000 hectares per year. An adequate valuation of the variety of forest goods and services will give family forest owners the incentive to continue to invest in sustainable forest management to the benefit of the generations to follow.

II. Priority areas for action

19. Family forest owners depend on a fair operating environment within which to optimize the sustainable management of wood and non-wood products. Policy and decision makers are asked to concentrate their efforts on establishing conditions for a long-term reliable legal framework within which social beneficial and economic viable investments can be made.

20. Sustainable development is increasingly called into question by the proliferation of single issue-driven conventions and processes with an impact on the forest-based sector. There is a strong need for the United Nations Forum on Forests to take the political responsibility for the sustainable development of the forest-based sector.

21. Policy and decision makers need to be aware that the family forest holding is where the "rubber hits the road"! Conflicting policies will finally decide on the viability and sustainability of small forest ownership.

III. Recommendations on achievable goals and targets

22. Value-added international cooperation should capitalize on the experiences gained in the regional forest policy processes, where substantial progress in defining criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management respecting regional priorities and needs has been achieved.

23. It is recommended that the international arrangement on forests (United Nations Forum on Forests) facilitate the exchange of experiences of the regional forest policy processes with respect to the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and thus promote the linkages between these processes.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

24. **The international arrangement on forests (United Nations Forum on Forests) needs to raise its profile as global policy forum where high-level commitment is achieved to promoting the abilities of the forest-based sector to implement the Millennium Development Goals. The discussion and elaboration on technical issues should be left to the assembled expertise within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.**

25. **The backbone of a strong international arrangement on forests (United Nations Forum on Forests) comprises strong regional forest policy processes that bring their expertise to the global discussion and decision-making. In its future work programme, the international arrangement on forests (United Nations Forum on Forests) needs to strengthen the regional elements.**